



**SEPTEMBER TIP SAVINGS: \$120-\$150/YR**  
**Avoided Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>: Up to 320 lbs./YR**

## \$USTAINABILITY \$AVINGS TIP

### **COMPOSTING: BREAKING IT DOWN TO THE BASICS**

*Easy steps to turn green waste into mulch*

With the arrival of the fall season comes a new opportunity to transform your garden or lawn into something new and attractive. Placing organic mulches or compost around your plants is an easy and cost-effective way to ensure plants stay healthy, while also keeping weeds in check. Making your own organic mulch is as easy as setting up a compost bin in your backyard. Applying compost mulch to plants once or twice a year can reduce plant water needs by as much as 30%, while also making safe use of waste that would otherwise end up in a landfill.

The composting process creates more efficient conditions for organic waste to decompose, producing nutrient rich mulch. Kitchen scraps, yard clippings, and other organic materials are most commonly used in composting bins. Here are some tips:

***Compost can reduce or eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides.***

#### **COMPOSTING TIPS**

1. Pick a spot for your compost pile that is convenient for you to access and close to a water source.
2. Layer carbon-rich materials (browns) to nitrogen-rich materials (greens). Layering helps to speed up the process and reduce odors. Here are examples:  
Browns- Sawdust, chipped branches, leaves, shredded paper, used paper towels and straw  
Greens - Kitchen fruit/vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, grass clippings, weed or leafy trimmings.
3. To aid the decomposition process, the pile needs oxygen and moisture. Turn the pile occasionally to aerate, and add water or any cooking liquids (pasta water, etc.) to keep the materials moist.
4. You know it is done when it smells earthy and you cannot identify the original materials.

#### **CHECKLIST FOR SAVINGS**

- ☐ **To learn to make your own compost**, attend the Harper's Garden Fair on Saturday, September 17 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Master Gardeners will be on site to provide composting information and details on Mesa's Backyard Composting Program (see below). Harper's Nursery is located at 1830 E. McKellips Road. Call 480-644-4400 for more information.
- ☐ **Mesa's Backyard Composting Program** provides compost containers (made from recycled trash bins) for a \$5.00 refundable deposit. Visit [www.mesarecycles.org](http://www.mesarecycles.org) for more information.
- ☐ **For books on gardening and composting** at City of Mesa Library, visit <http://www.mesalibrary.org>.
- ☐ **Steps to successful composting** and tips to recycling your kitchen waste can be found at [www.mesaaz.gov/waste/successful\\_composting.aspx](http://www.mesaaz.gov/waste/successful_composting.aspx).

#### **\$START \$AVING**

Start saving by composting and doing your part for *building a sustainable community*. Visit our Web site for more sustainability savings tips at [www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability](http://www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability).

*Learn to live Green*